

WHO WERE TROILUS, CRISEYDE, AND PANDARUS?

CHAUCER, like many other medieval poets, sometimes incorporated into his work personal allegories in which real people are presented under the guise of imagined characters. Manly¹ has shown that several of the Canterbury pilgrims were doubtless modeled from actual people whom Chaucer knew. The Black Knight in *The Book of the Duchess* represents John of Gaunt; and many scholarly articles have purported to identify real-life originals of characters in Chaucer's lesser poems.

"Curiosity on this subject, it is proper to add," says Robinson, "is not merely trivial. Such inquiries and conjectures help toward an understanding of the poet's imagination and of the material on which he worked."²

Robinson suspects that characters in *Troilus and Criseyde* are borrowed from life: "Where Chaucer got the suggestion for his conceptions of Pandarus and Criseyde it would be interesting to know. Perhaps there were living models for both of them."³ The present study is an attempt to show that the chief characters in the poem were probably modeled from real people, and to suggest the identity of these people. As Robinson says, however, "In such identifications demonstration is not to be looked for."⁴ Nevertheless, I believe there is enough evidence at hand to make "inquiries and conjectures" profitable, and to interest and concern every student of Chaucer.

I. Some General Probabilities

I. In the Proem of *Il Filostrato*, the work from which *Troilus and Criseyde* is adapted, Boccaccio announces plainly that the chief characters in his poem represent himself and

his mistress. He says that, before he undertook the poem, he began "to turn over in my mind with great care ancient stories, in order to find one that would serve, in all color of likelihood, as a mask for my secret and amorous grief." Troilus's fortunes and misfortunes, he tells his mistress, are "in conformity with the facts in my case"; and "things praiseworthy in a lady written of Criseida you may understand to be said of you."⁶ With such testimony before him, Chaucer could hardly have avoided the thought of introducing personal allegory into his own poem.

II. In the Prologue of *The Legend of Good Women* Chaucer hints that he wrote the *Troilus* at the behest of some powerful personage.⁶ The powerful personage with whom Chaucer and his family were most closely associated for many years was John of Gaunt.⁷ Accordingly, when Chaucer hints that he was doing the bidding of some powerful personage, we think immediately of John of Gaunt.

This is only a guess, of course; but the guess seems strengthened by evidence from one of the earliest manuscripts of the poem—the one known as the Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS. 61.⁸ This manuscript was evidently planned as a superb treasure of art and literature. Most significantly, it was owned by the Countess of Westmoreland, granddaughter of John of Gaunt and Katherine Swynford. Brusendorff surmises that the Countess "had the Corpus Christi MS. transcribed from a family copy of Chaucer's *Troilus*"; and he adds that "the lavish execution, regardless of cost, makes it unlikely that the original was a presentation copy from the poet to John of Gaunt; rather it was ordered from a firm of publishing copyists by the Duke himself."⁹ In any event, it seems likely that John of Gaunt and his granddaughter through Katherine Swynford had a very special interest in this poem.

III. Evidence of this family's interest in the poem brings to mind a real-life situation within this family itself which overpoweringly suggests the situation in the poem. I refer to the love of a king's younger son for a young widow beneath him in rank. The situation in the poem is a perfect replica of the celebrated (and notorious) liaison between John of Gaunt and Katherine Swynford—a king's younger son in love with a young widow beneath him in rank. This unique parallel between the fictional situation and the real-life situation is almost enough, of itself, to suggest that Troilus and Criseyde may represent John and Katherine.

It is impossible not to believe that Chaucer was intensely interested in this famous and romantic liaison between his own sister-in-law and one of the major political and military figures of the age. His interest in John is proved by *The Book of the Duchess*; and I have shown elsewhere that the *The Complaint of Mars* is probably a fanciful account of an episode in the lives of John and Katherine.¹⁰ *Troilus and Criseyde* may be another such account.

IV. Criseyde's unfaithfulness to Troilus does not, so far as our ignorance permits us to say, belong to the history of the John-Katherine liaison. Nevertheless, it is likely—if human nature in the fourteenth century was like human nature today—that John and Katherine quarreled on occasion, and separated. As a matter of fact, it is of record that John and Katherine did separate temporarily in 1381.¹¹ Chaucer, who probably commenced his poem not long after 1381, may have been giving a poetic version of this separation.

Mere knowledge of human nature would suggest further that, perhaps, Katherine's father objected to the liaison, and at some time recalled his daughter. This is rank speculation; but it seems credible, and it would account for both the

separation of the lovers and the rather rough treatment accorded Calchas in the poem.

Actually, however, such speculation is beside the point. A good writer seldom forces his allegories to fit actual facts down to the last detail; and medieval writers were notoriously inconsistent in such matters. Even Boccaccio, having said that *Il Filostrato* symbolizes real-life characters and incidents, explains that other matters unsanctioned by reality are included "only because the story of the noble young lover requireth it."¹² Chaucer too says that he refrains from speaking of Criseyde's unfaithfulness "Forther than the storye wol devyse" (V.1094).

Marchette Chute, in her popular biography of Chaucer, remarks that Chaucer had "a thorough dislike of the traditional ending of the story."¹³ "What had happened to the unhappy Criseyde and her equally unhappy creator," says Miss Chute very discerningly, "was that the story in which they were involved had betrayed them both. . . . Criseyde's creator had been incapable of resisting the ancient plot . . . and there was nothing he could do but carry it through to the bitter end."¹⁴ Tatlock believes the same thing. He says that Chaucer, having spent as much time as possible on the love affair itself, "can no longer defer what must happen in the familiar story." Criseyde "had to do just as her original had done." But Chaucer himself "has not the heart to watch the steps of her decline."¹⁵ He finishes off the story hastily and with little originality.

In short, if Chaucer's poem is actually an allegory of the liaison between John and Katherine, Criseyde's unfaithfulness does not necessarily reflect a similar unfaithfulness of Katherine. This unpleasant part of the story is forced on a reluctant Chaucer by his "auctor," or by "the dramatic necessities of the action,"¹⁶ or by some literary convention.¹⁷

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Chaucer's paramount interest is, quite clearly, the love affair itself, not the break-up of the affair. And when (for whatever reason) he is compelled to present Criseyde unfavorably, he apologizes for her:

Ne me ne list this sely womman chyde
 Forther than the storye wil devyse.
 Hire name, alas! is punysshed so wide,
 That for hire gilt it ought ynough suffice.
 And if I myghte excuse hire any wise,
 For she so sory was for hire untrouthe,
 Iwis, I wolde excuse hire yet for routhe.
 (V.1093-99)

Chaucer's extreme care to portray Criseyde as favorably as the story will admit is most peculiar. Why should he soften his condemnation of a traitress—especially a traitress in love at a period when treachery in love was the worst sin a character of romance could commit—if the woman concerned were only another character borrowed from fiction? I can think of no better explanation of Chaucer's delicacy here than to assume that Criseyde stands for some real-life original whom the poet wished to defend. The original may or may not have been Katherine Swynford; but if she *was* Katherine, Chaucer's leniency toward Criseyde would be entirely understandable: he would hardly have dared condemn the great Duke's beloved mistress, or have wanted to abuse his own sister-in-law.

V. Chaucer's departures from Boccaccio in this poem have been the subject of several graduate theses and many scholarly commentaries. Full examination of these departures is out of the question here, even though I think many of them could be explained by reference to the allegorical interpretation offered in this paper. My more immediate problem is to present evidence that this interpretation is tenable, at least, and perhaps strongly probable.

A word, however, may be spared for Chaucer's major departures, as conveniently analyzed by French.¹⁸ Examination of these shows that Chaucer evidently wished (1) to make Troilus and Criseyde seem as much like ideal lovers and superior people as possible; (2) to explain and excuse Criseyde's unfaithfulness; and (3) to increase the importance of Pandarus in the story.¹⁹

Of course, these changes do not of themselves identify the poem as an allegory of the John-Katherine affair. But groups (1) and (2) could be expected if the poem were such an allegory; and group (3), as will be seen later, also fits into the hypothesis.

What I have said so far is not so much an attempt to show that *Troilus and Criseyde* is an allegory of the John-Katherine affair, as that it *could* be an allegory of that affair. More specific evidence follows.

2. Specific Evidence

VI. Boccaccio says plainly that his Criseida had neither son nor daughter.²⁰ But Chaucer, who could have avoided complications by going along with Boccaccio, states carefully:

But whether that she children hadde or noon,
I rede it naught, therefore I late it goon.

(I.132-33)

This singular alteration of Boccaccio must have been made for some reason. Was the reason the fact that Katherine Swynford was the mother of a son and a daughter by Sir Hugh Swynford when her affair with John commenced—and that Chaucer did not feel that it would be either realistic or diplomatic to deny the existence of these children? It is a seemingly trivial change; but, in the 1380's, it would have been a vital key to the allegory.

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VII. An extremely interesting departure from Boccaccio involves Hector. In *Il Filostrato* Hector appears in two stanzas (Bk. I, St. 13-14) as Criseida's protector, and thereafter is mentioned only half a dozen times, and then casually. Chaucer, however, not only includes Boccaccio's references to Hector (often in an elaborated version), but mentions Hector more than twenty times, and goes out of his way to insert laudatory comments about Hector that do not appear in Boccaccio or any other source of this particular story.

Thus Boccaccio has Pandaro tell Criseida: "I do not believe that [God] ever put *a more perfect soul in anyone* than is the soul of him who loveth thee. . . . He is lofty of soul and of speech, very virtuous, and jealous of honor, wise in natural sense *beyond any other*, and *without a superior* in knowledge. . . . I do not believe that there is in the world *any man more worthy* of confidence than he, or more faithful."²¹ Nowhere does Boccaccio suggest that Troilo is the inferior of Hector, or of anybody else.

Chaucer, on the other hand, forces Hector into the picture, ranks him unmistakably the first among men, and declares repeatedly that Troilus is only "Ector the secounde" (II.158), or just below Hector in worthiness.²²

Of Ector nedeth namore for to telle:
In al this world there nys a bettre knyght
Than he, that is of worthynesse welle.

(II.176-79)

For out and out he [Troilus] is the worthieste,
Save only Ector, which that is the beste.

(II.739-41)

He [Troilus] was, and ay, the first in armes dyght,
And certeynly, but if that bokes erre,
Save Ector most ydred of any wight.

(III.737-39)

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As he [Troilus] that was withouten any peere,
Save Ector, in his tyme, as I kan heere.

(V.1803-04)

The fact that all this praise of Hector is quite without authority in Boccaccio makes us suspect that Chaucer was being especially cautious about not claiming too much for Troilus. What was the reason for this caution, this obvious eagerness to exalt Hector above the real hero of the story? The answer to this question may lie within the contemporary political situation.

It seems clear that, if Troilus does stand for John of Gaunt, Hector, King Priam's oldest son, must stand for John's older brother, Edward, Prince of Wales (the Black Prince), who was idolized in England when the John-Katherine affair commenced, and whose memory was worshiped long afterward. Moreover, in the 1380's, when Chaucer's poem was probably written, a very large number of Englishmen suspected that John was plotting to seize the throne from the late Prince Edward's son, the little King Richard II. Under the circumstances, any suggestion by Chaucer that John (Troilus?) was in any way superior to Edward (Hector?) would have amounted, in that touchy time, to virtual treason. It would have been dangerous, if not fatal, to Chaucer, and almost equally dangerous to John himself.

All this may not actually prove that Hector stands for Prince Edward; but it is the only reasonable explanation that presents itself for Chaucer's very remarkable divergences from Boccaccio in this matter.

VIII. One of Chaucer's most notable inventions, about which there has been a great deal of scholarly speculation, is the entirely original passage in which an eagle seizes Criseyde's heart out of her breast, and leaves his own in return (II.925-31). Perhaps we may explain the passage if

we remember that the poem was written in an age when heraldic symbolism carried a vital meaning and importance to everybody.²³

In at least one poem (*The Book of the Duchess*, l. 1319) and probably in another (*The Complaint of Mars*, l. 9), Chaucer alludes symbolically to John of Gaunt as "Saint John." Now the traditional symbol, used regularly in medieval sculpture and painting, of Saint John the Evangelist, after whom John of Gaunt was presumably named, was an eagle.²⁴ Furthermore, "Edward III used an eagle as an extra crest, and passed it on to John of Gaunt, from whom, through the Beauforts, it descended."²⁵ But the Beauforts, it will be remembered, were John's descendants through none other than Katherine Swynford. Actually, the eagle seems to have been commonly recognized by contemporary writers as a symbol of John himself. Thus, Gower refers to Henry Bolingbroke as "aquile pullus"²⁶ ("offspring of the eagle"), and Adam Usk likewise calls Henry "pullus aquile, quia filius Iohannis."²⁷ (It may be worth noting that the canopy of Henry's tomb "is powdered with Eagles volant, Crowned, within the Garter."²⁸)

In a word, this gratuitous episode in the poem, wherein a widely recognized symbol of John of Gaunt is linked with Criseyde, can hardly have been an unpremeditated outburst by Chaucer. If it has significance (and undoubtedly it does), the significance probably lies within the heraldic implications of the eagle.

IX. In a passage original with him (II.666-79) Chaucer defends Criseyde against the "envious jangle" that she fell in love too lightly and too soon. He returns to this topic later on (II.1291-98), and has Criseyde argue that it is "ek to soone" for her to love Troilus, and has Pandarus grumble that "this nyce opynyoun / Shall nought be holden fully yeres two."

There has been much critical speculation about this phrase "yeres two"; but it has apparently been agreed that some "social practice or literary precedent" approved a two-year period of widowhood.²⁹ Apparently Chaucer felt that he had to defend Criseyde against charges that she fell in love with Troilus too easily, as well as too soon after being widowed. It has been argued that, in so defending her, Chaucer was merely deferring to a convention of courtly love demanding a long resistance by the lady. If Criseyde, however, was only a fictional character, Chaucer could easily have pictured her holding out for the required time, thus making apologies superfluous.

But if she really stands for Katherine, reasons why he showed her yielding soon, and therefore needing a defense, become immediately apparent. John of Gaunt returned to England with a new Spanish wife late in 1371. This wife (chosen for dynastic reasons only) was a morbidly religious, unattractive girl with a single-minded devotion to the memory of her murdered father. Sir Hugh Swynford, Katherine's husband, had been killed in France in November, 1371.³⁰ Now John of Gaunt's grants of cash, pensions, and lands to Katherine show a sudden and marked increase in early May, 1372.³¹ Probably, therefore, the liaison between them began about then. (Chaucer has the Troilus-Criseyde affair begin in April—I.155-56.) But if the real-life liaison began in April-May, 1372, there must have been a great deal of unfavorable gossip about Katherine's taking a new lover so quickly, and so soon after her husband's death. Chaucer's wish to defend Katherine from the gossip would perfectly explain his eager and otherwise quite perplexing defense of Criseyde for her quick capitulation.

X. Chaucer is equally eager to defend Troilus for falling so desperately in love. In a famous passage (I.232-59) which is entirely original with Chaucer, the poet, having told of

Troilus' overwhelming love, takes time out to lecture those "wise, proude, and worthi folkes" who scorn love. He reminds them that love is irresistible, that love makes good men better still, and that it is well known that the wisest and strongest men are the greatest lovers.³²

If we remember that contemporary opinion, high and low, worldly and clerical, bitterly condemned John for his long and open devotion to the waiting-maid Katherine, and if we assume that Troilus stands for John—we may see in this passage a meaning extraordinarily rich and appropriate. It is not only a poetic defense of love, but a poet's brilliant defense of a friend against public criticism.

The same purpose may inspire the lines (also original with Chaucer) near the beginning of the poem (I.38-52), in which compassion is asked for lovers "that falsely ben apeired / Through wikked tonges, be it he or she." The only conceivable reason why Chaucer would take it on himself to defend his fictional lovers from gossip and slander is that they must represent real persons who have been the victims of gossip and slander. Whether these real persons were John and Katherine we cannot say for certain; but it would be consistent with everything else in the poem if they did represent John and Katherine.

In connection with the passage just cited, it is to be noted that Chaucer asks compassion for both men and women injured by wicked tongues; Boccaccio asks compassion for himself alone. The change could be easily accounted for under the interpretation presented here. Furthermore, it may be significant that Chaucer says he has as much compassion for the two "As though I were *hire owne brother dere*" (I.52)—for he was indeed the brother-in-law of Katherine and John.

All these hints and suggestions dropped near the begin-

ning of the poem almost certainly indicate one of the reasons why the poem was written, and suggest the persons about whom it was written.

XI. In a very important departure from Boccaccio, Chaucer pictures Troilus as not having loved previously. One reason for this departure must have been Chaucer's eagerness to defend Troilus against the slander of light and hasty love. Furthermore, if Troilus does stand for John, Chaucer could not possibly have followed Boccaccio in having Troilo regard his former love as a "great folly" and "an accursed fire." To have done so would have damned both the dead Blanche and the living Constance. If Troilus is John, Chaucer did the only discreet thing; he simply ignored Troilus' former loves. Again, this does not prove that Troilus represents John; but it is one more item neatly consistent with that hypothesis, and hard to explain otherwise.

XII. Chaucer invents the long episode in which Pandarus persuades Deiphebus to help defend Criseyde from her creditors (II.1414 ff.), the dinner at Deiphebus' house (II.1555 ff.), and Troilus' singular confession that he loves Deiphebus best of all his brothers (II.1396-98). If there was a historical parallel (in Katherine's life) for the dinner, no one would know about it now. That the young widow Katherine must have been harried by creditors—in an age when widows and orphans were considered a legitimate source of profit—is certain. But Troilus' special love for Deiphebus needs explaining.

John of Gaunt had four brothers. Lionel died in 1368, before the affair with Katherine commenced; the Black Prince and John were rivals who gradually became enemies; Thomas, later Duke of Gloucester, was a brutal, violent man who was often at odds with John. This leaves only Prince Edmund. He was an easy-going man who always remained

friends with John, aided him in his ambitious Continental enterprises, and married the sister of John's wife Constance. If Troilus represents John, then Deiphebus must represent Edmund; and Chaucer's having Troilus declare that he loves Deiphebus best of all his brothers becomes natural and understandable.

XIII. The portraits of the lovers, introduced at V.806-40, are original with Chaucer, and have been the subject of much critical speculation and comment. All questions would be solved, however, if we assume that Chaucer had two living people in mind, and wanted to please them with flattering pictures of themselves—especially at a point in the poem where one of the people was badly misbehaving. Once more, nothing is actually proved; but the detail fits into the general pattern, and cannot be otherwise readily explained.

We do not know enough about Katherine to judge whether Chaucer's description of Criseyde fits the real woman. But some of the specific and unique details Chaucer mentions suggest that he had an actual person in mind; and his remark, "But trewely, I kan nat telle hire age" (V.826), would have been discreetly necessary only if he were speaking of a real woman.

The description of Troilus fits John of Gaunt perfectly. John was a typical Plantaganet—tall, fair, and handsome; and Fernão Lopes, describing John at about the age of fifty, pictures "a well-formed man, tall and erect, with not so much flesh as his height required."³⁴ This tallies well with Chaucer's picture of the young Troilus:

And Troilus wel woxen was in hight,
And complet formed by proporcioun
So wel that kynde it nought amenden myghte;
Yong, fressh, strong, and hardy as a lyoun.

(V.827-30)

John's biographer, Sydney Armitage-Smith, speaks of him as "a man whose conversation was reserved and had something of what with an enemy would pass for haughtiness and with a friend for dignity."³⁵ This description is reflected perfectly in Chaucer's own phrase about Troilus: "His heighte port and his manere estraunge" (I.1084). On the other hand, when love reformed him, Troilus became "the friendliest man / Of gret estat, that evere I saugh my lyve" (II.204-05), gentle, generous, brave, provident, chivalrous (I.1070-85). Again, all this fits Armitage-Smith's view of John's character: "he held the laws of chivalry more sacred than those of Parliament" (p. 411); he had a fine "knightly modesty" (p. 412), was notably courageous (pp. 48, 52, 412), valued learning (pp. 413, 415), left behind him a record (in a century that could be savage) "extraordinarily free from acts of violence and oppression" (p. 416), sympathized with the poor and the humble (p. 418), and did many an act of kindness and of charity (p. 418). These personal virtues (which Troilus also possessed), and not John's long record of political and military failures, must have attracted Chaucer—who was always more interested in people than in politics and policies.

The only item in Troilus' character that seems not to fit the usual conception of John is Troilus' early scorn of love. The John of tradition was notoriously amorous. On the other hand, his reputation for amorousness seems to have been largely due to the Katherine affair itself. And I have already shown that, if Troilus does represent John, Chaucer was virtually compelled by circumstances to ignore the young man's earlier love affairs.

XIV. More than half of Chaucer's alterations of and additions to *Il Filostrato* in his own poem serve to make Pandarus a more prominent figure. The tendency of older

scholarship, with its roots in Victorianism and its values colored by the unsavory connotations of the modern word *pander*, was to regard the role of Pandarus as "one of infamy and dishonor."³⁶ But modern scholarship leans more to the belief that "Chaucer intended Pandarus's role as intermediary, uncle, and friend to be ideal, and wholly commendable."³⁷ He is neither a villain nor a mere piece of machinery necessary for the plot. As Coghill has said, "Pandarus is Chaucer's first creation of a piece of actuality . . . the first grown-up in English, the first worldling, the first figure of *Canterbury Tales* dimension. . . . He is on a Shakespearian scale."³⁸

With acute discernment, Coghill goes on to say that Pandarus "seems to offer a speaking portrait of his own creator, Geoffrey Chaucer. . . . Perhaps this partial self-portraiture was entirely unconscious, but it is striking and may well be a reason why Pandarus is so lively and lovable."³⁹

Indeed, if Troilus stands for John of Gaunt, and Criseyde for Katherine Swynford, Pandarus can hardly stand for anyone else but Geoffrey Chaucer. Even the mere factual alterations that Chaucer makes in Boccaccio's story bring the situation into close conformity with the John-Katherine-Chaucer relationship. By making him an uncle instead of a cousin of Criseyde, Chaucer gives Pandarus a right to be something of a guardian and elder adviser of the young widow. At the same time, however, he keeps Pandarus young enough⁴⁰ to be adventurous, unconventional, and somewhat sensual.

This rather peculiar pattern of relative ages, which was deliberately altered from Boccaccio, fits the peculiar circumstances in the age relationships of John, Katherine, and Chaucer. John and Chaucer were about the same age,⁴¹ as

were Troilus and Pandarus;⁴² yet Pandarus was clearly older than Criseyde, just as Chaucer was about ten years older than Katherine. In Boccaccio, all three are about the same age. When the John-Katherine affair commenced, probably in 1372, John and Chaucer were a little over thirty years old, and Katherine was a bit over twenty. ("Personally," says Kirby, "I am sure Pandarus is still in his early thirties."⁴³) That is, Chaucer was just the right age to be (like Pandarus) an elder relative of Katherine, but not so old as to be sedate and conventional. In other words, Chaucer's alterations in the relationship and the relative ages of Pandarus and Criseyde make the situation fit the Chaucer-Katherine situation with almost startling neatness.

XV. As Coghill says, Pandarus strikingly resembles the Chaucer whom we know. Pandarus is a man of proverbs—and so was Chaucer. Pandarus was something of a diplomat and "fixer"—and so, apparently, was Chaucer in his various official missions. Pandarus is a familiar in the royal court—and so was Chaucer. Pandarus is well acquainted with at least two royal princes—and Chaucer was well acquainted with at least Prince Lionel and Prince John. Pandarus is something of a philosopher—and so was Chaucer. Pandarus has humor, sophistication, and shrewd understanding of human nature—and so did Chaucer. Pandarus is a man deprived of happiness in love⁴⁴—and Chaucer frequently professes himself (even in this very poem) to be one whom love has passed by.⁴⁵

Pandarus is an amateur astrologer (II.74-77); Boccaccio's Pandaro is not. Yet Chaucer's own interest in astrology is well known.

Pandarus gives Troilus some pointers on the art of writing, and is evidently an expert in the field (II.1023-43); Boccaccio's Pandaro has no such literary talents. Thus

Chaucer's Pandarus resembles still more the father of English literature.

In talking with Criseyde, Pandarus banters with her, and tells his "beste japes" till "she for laughter wende for to dye" (II.1167-69). Boccaccio's Pandaro is no such jester. Thus again Chaucer has made Pandarus resemble the greatest humorist in English literature.

These resemblances between Pandarus and Chaucer are so abundant, so apt, and so peculiar that it is virtually impossible to regard them as merely coincidental.

XVI. If Chaucer actually had a part in bringing John and Katherine together, history has not recorded it—nor would history have been likely to record it if it happened. On the other hand, if Chaucer did play Cupid to the two, he probably felt very proud of himself for doing so signal a favor to the great Duke of Lancaster, and for bringing permanent happiness into the lives of two formerly unhappy people. He must have considered his role as "ideal and wholly commendable." That could have been a reason—together with normal self-esteem and desire that John should not forget who had been indispensable in the match-making—why Chaucer expanded the role of Pandarus in this new version of the old story.

XVII. So far, I have discussed the *Troilus* in relation to historical fact only; but now I wish to mention one literary relationship that has a bearing on the problem.

That Dante had a considerable influence on Chaucer is well known. Clark writes: "A cursory survey of the notes in Robinson's edition produces references to at least eight very probable or certain instances of the direct influence of the *Divine Comedy* on *Troilus and Criseyde* (outside the epilogue), and at least eighteen further very possible ones."⁴⁶ Clark goes on to the conclusion that "almost every detail

of the epilogue of *Troilus and Criseyde*" could have been suggested to Chaucer by a reading or a recollection of *Paradiso* XIV and XXII.⁴⁷ Reading on a little farther in the *Paradiso* reveals, however, an even closer relationship to Chaucer's epilogue, as well as to the passage in the *Teseida* (XI.1-3) from which it has been usually assumed that Chaucer took the materials for his epilogue.

The epilogue, it will be remembered, describes Troilus' spirit mounting to the eighth heavenly sphere,⁴⁸ and looking down on the earth and his own body. After this description, Chaucer finishes the poem proper with three stanzas contrasting heavenly and earthly love. All this irresistibly suggests the last twenty lines of *Paradiso* XXV, and the first sixty-six of *Paradiso* XXVI. In these lines Dante pictures himself mounting to the eighth heavenly sphere, meeting Saint John (called *aguglia di Cristo*, "Christ's Eagle"), hearing Saint John explain how his (John's) body now lies on earth, listening to John's brief sermon on heavenly love, and himself contrasting this heavenly love with earthly love.

It seems to me beyond question that this part of the *Paradiso* influenced the epilogue of *Troilus*, and thus inevitably associates Troilus with Saint John. But in at least one, and probably in two, other poems by Chaucer, the name of Saint John is used to help identify John of Gaunt. The epilogue, therefore, is probably an important key by which the identity of the real-life Troilus is revealed. The eighth sphere, the eagle, the body on earth and the spirit in heaven, the discourse on earthly and heavenly love, and the name of John cannot all be merely accidental.

A far longer paper than this would be required for analysis of the *Troilus* in relation to the interpretation here offered. But exciting possibilities lie everywhere. Let me suggest only three. In view of Chaucer's fondness for puns,⁴⁹

(probably illustrated also in the play on the names of Saint John and John of Gaunt), is the line, "For kaught is proud, and kaught is debonaire" (I.214) a pun on the name *Kate*? Is the difficult and hitherto mysterious phrase "corones tweye" (II.1735) an allusion to the crowns of Castile and Leon claimed by John? Is Chaucer's criticism of people and Parliament (IV.183-217) inspired by the long enmity of people and Parliament to John of Gaunt? Matters for fresh speculation appear on almost every page.

As a matter of fact, I freely admit that this entire paper is only speculation: "demonstration is not to be looked for." No single item of evidence proves conclusively that the *Troilus* is an allegory of the love affair of John of Gaunt and Katherine Swynford. Nor do I believe that the poem is *merely* such an allegory. Nevertheless, I think the evidence that the poem does indeed contain a romanticized version of that famous affair is so abundant and so persuasive that it must not be ignored.

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NOTES

1. John Matthews Manly, *Some New Light on Chaucer* (New York, 1926).
2. *The Poetical Works of Chaucer*, ed. F. N. Robinson (Boston, 1933), p. 3.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 451.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
5. Nathaniel Edward Griffin and Arthur Beckwith Myrick, *The Filostrato of Giovanni Boccaccio; a Translation with Parallel Text* (Philadelphia, 1929), pp. 126-29.
6. Robinson's G Text, ll. 345-46.
7. Chaucer and his wife drew pensions, or received gifts, from John through two decades; the sister of Chaucer's wife was John's third wife; Chaucer wrote *The Book of the Duchess* in memory of John's first wife; Chaucer's son Thomas was taken

into John's service; Chaucer received gifts and pensions from John's son Henry Bolingbroke, or Henry IV.

8. This MS. is well described and illustrated in "The 'Troilus' Frontispiece," by Margaret Galway, *MLR*, XLIV (1949), 161-71.
9. Aage Brusendorff, *The Chaucer Tradition* (London, 1925), p. 21.
10. "What Is the Meaning of Chaucer's *The Complaint of Mars*?" *JEGP*, forthcoming.
11. *Chronicon Henrici Knighton*, ed. Joseph Rawson Lumby (London, 1895), II, 147-48.
12. Griffin and Myrick, *op. cit.*, p. 129.
13. Marchette Chute, *Geoffrey Chaucer of England* (New York, 1946), p. 179.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
15. J. S. P. Tatlock, *The Mind and Art of Chaucer* (Syracuse, 1950), pp. 46, 48. See also "Chaucer's Portrait of Criseyde," by Nathaniel Edward Griffin, *JEGP*, XX (1921), 39; and Chute. *op. cit.*, p. 179.
16. Arthur Mizener, "Character and Action in the Case of Criseyde," *PMLA*, LIV (1939), 81.
17. See especially C. S. Lewis, "What Chaucer Really Did to *Il Filostrato*," *Essays and Studies*, XVII (1932), 56-75. See also the many studies of the poem as illustrative of theories of courtly love.
18. Robert Dudley French, *A Chaucer Handbook* (New York, 1947), pp. 178-83.
19. Chaucer's major departures from Boccaccio, as listed and numbered by French, are here classified according to the groupings in my text:
 - (1) French, pp. 179-80, Nos. 1 to 6; p. 181, Nos. 5, 9, 10, 12; p. 182, No. 3.
 - (2) French, p. 179-80, No. 4; pp. 180-81, Nos. 1, 5, 10, 12; p. 182, No. 4.
 - (3) French, pp. 180-181. Nos. 3, 4, 8; pp. 181-82, Nos. 1 to 3.
20. *Il Filostrato*, Bk. I, St. 11.
21. Griffin and Myrick, *op. cit.*, pp. 183, 189 (*Il Filostrato*, Bk. II, St. 41, 42, 54). The italics are mine.
22. II.444; V.1564-65.
23. Witness the tremendous furor of the Scrope-Grosvenor controversy, and John of Gaunt's bitter feud with the City of London because certain rioters had reversed John's arms hanging before a building on a London street.
24. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York, 1910), VIII, 493.
25. C. Wilfrid Scott-Giles, *The Romance of Heraldry* (London, 1929), pp. 75-77.

26. In "Prophecies," *The Works of John Gower*, ed. G. C. Macaulay, (Oxford, 1902), IV, 344.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 416.
28. Francis Sandford, *A Genealogical History of the Kings of England and Monarchs of Great Britain* (London, 1677), p. 343.
29. Thomas Kirby, "A Note on *Troilus*, II, 1298," *MLR*, XXIX (1934), 67-68.
30. Sydney Armitage-Smith, *John of Gaunt* (London, 1904), p. 93.
31. Albert S. Cook, *Chaucerian Papers*, Trans. Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, XXIII (1919), p. 45.
32. See also *Troilus*' song, III.1744-71, and Antigone's song, II. 855-61. Compare also *The Complaint of Mars*, II. 263-298, in which Mars (John of Gaunt?) pleads for lovers, knights, and ladies to sympathize with him in his illicit love.
33. *Il Filostrato*, Bk. I, St. 23.
34. Translated from *Chronica de El Rei D. Joao I* (Lisbon, 1897), Vol. V, p. lxxxix.
35. Armitage-Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 409.
36. Robert K. Root, *The Poetry of Chaucer* (Boston, 1906; rev. ed., 1922), p. 120.
37. Eugene E. Slaughter, "Chaucer's Pandarus: Virtuous Uncle and Friend," *JEGP*, XLVIII (1949), 186.
38. Nevill Coghill, *The Poet Chaucer* (London, 1949), p. 65.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
40. See Thomas A. Kirby, *Chaucer's "Troilus": A Study in Courtly Love* (University, Louisiana, 1940), pp. 186-187, and also J. S. P. Tatlock, "The People in Chaucer's *Troilus*," *PMLA*, LVI (1941), 95, for discussions of Pandarus' age.
41. For these estimates and those immediately following, see *DNB*.
42. See especially Tatlock, *loc. cit.*
43. Kirby, *op. cit.*, p. 187.
44. See I.622-72, 711-18; II.57-63, 98-99; IV.397-99.
45. See, for example, *The Parliament of Fowls* (ll. 8-9), *The Legend of Good Women* (Prologue C, l. 480), and *Troilus*, I.15-18; II.19-21.
46. John W. Clark, "Dante and the Epilogue of *Troilus*," *JEGP*, L (1951), 2, n. 3.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
48. Some of the MSS. read *seventh*, and there has been a good deal of recent comment upholding this reading. But Robinson and most other scholars point out that Boccaccio wrote "*ottava*," and that *eighth* is more consistent with medieval conceptions of astronomy. A copyist's misreading of *vij* instead of the original *viii* would have been very easy.
49. See Paull F. Baum, "Chaucer's Puns," *PMLA*, LXXI (1956), 225-46.